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The Approximate Composition of Cuts From Lamb Carcasses
of Different Degrees of Fatness

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In preparing the table presented below data were available on the carcass composition of a total of 74 lambs studied at the United States Animal Husbandry Experiment Station, National Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Maryland. The lambs varied widely with respect to breeding and weight as well as to ether-extract (fat) content of the edible portion of the dressed carcasses, the latter through a range of from 5.8 percent to 45.8 percent. Based on a study of the variation in ether-extract content and a knowledge of the appearance of the carcasses the lambs were classified as follows: 35 percent or more ether extract as "Fat", 20 to 34 percent inclusive as "Intermediate", and less than 20 percent as "Thin".

Forty-two of the 74 carcasses had been cut by a uniform method which included, among other steps, the preparation of a 3-rib shoulder and a 9-rib "rack" or rib cut. The trimmed leg, also the rib, shoulder, loin, neck, and breast cuts of these lambs had been subjected to physical analysis and the first three cuts mentioned to both physical and chemical analyses.

In ether-extract content of the dressed carcasses and in breeding and weight the 42 lambs were a good representation of the 74 lambs. Among the 42 lambs, 8 pure breeds and 6 crosses between breeds occurred. The chilled-carcass weights ranged from 13.5 to 70.0 pounds, with an average of 33.6 pounds.

The values for the various components of the several cuts, as shown in the table below, are offered as a general guide and should not be considered as necessarily indicative of the exact composition of the cut in any particular instance.

Approximate average composition of cuts from fat, intermediate,
and thin lamb carcasses

(Classification based on ether-extract content of edible portion
of carcass)

Cuts and components	Classification of carcasses		
	Fat (35 percent and over)	Intermediate (20 to 34 percent)	Thin (Under 20 percent)
Number of carcasses.....	10	19	13
Average weight ...pounds	47.53	34.37	21.87
Carcass as analyzed:			
Separable fat...percent	33.02	22.16	11.47
Separable lean.. "	48.07	55.74	57.87
Bone	18.91	22.10	30.66
Edible portion:			
Ether extract. "	39.83	27.67	14.77
Ether extract, actual range	35.39 - 45.84	21.96 - 34.30	5.78 - 19.69
Protein..... "	13.03	15.74	17.13
Water..... "	46.21	55.82	56.27
Ash..... "	0.67	0.80	0.90
Trimmed leg:			
Separable fat... "	18.52	14.44	7.60
Separable lean.. "	65.20	68.92	69.79
Bone..... "	16.28	16.64	22.61
Edible portion:			
Ether extract	22.37	17.46	9.06
Protein..... "	16.67	17.97	18.36
Water..... "	59.84	63.72	70.99
Ash..... "	0.85	0.93	0.98
Rib cut (9 ribs):			
Separable fat... "	40.34	24.46	10.04
Separable lean.. "	41.46	51.72	55.24
Bone and ligament "	18.20	23.82	34.72
Edible portion:			
Ether extract	49.17	32.43	15.64
Protein..... "	11.18	14.89	17.73
Water..... "	38.67	51.90	65.27
Ash..... "	0.55	0.80	0.87
3 rib shoulder cut:			
Separable fat... "	27.14	18.01	11.54
Separable lean.. "	55.23	62.01	61.69
Bone and ligament "	17.63	19.98	26.77
Edible portion:			
Ether extract.. "	34.29	25.27	14.69
Protein..... "	13.56	15.59	16.70
Water..... "	51.32	58.32	67.17
Ash..... "	0.68	0.82	0.94
Loin cut:			
Separable fat.... "	38.63	24.10	11.67
Separable lean... "	49.84	60.71	64.85
Bone..... "	11.53	15.19	23.48
Neck:			
Separable fat.... "	29.06	15.26	5.55
Separable lean... "	42.79	52.84	53.55
Bone and ligament "	28.15	31.90	40.90
Breast:			
Separable fat.... "	35.11	26.02	12.07
Separable lean... "	39.31	45.68	48.72
Bone..... "	25.58	28.30	39.21

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